



A MYSTERY UNTIL NOW?

Dunking Dr Jacobs in the Food Vat

Martin S. Kottmeyer

IT IS FAIR to say that disbelievers in alien abduction claims find most of David Jacobs' book *The Threat* (1998) a matter of high weirdness and maybe even a bit funny. Believers, a few anyways, however feel it is an important book. It deserves respect for calling attention to a world-class danger arising from the visions of those closest to the centre of the action of the UFO saga. (Sandow, ufoevidence) How dare you dismiss it.

There is one part of Jacobs' book I found especially amusing. Against their wills, I trust even believers can be convinced this bit of the book is worth at least a smirk. Even if you are completely allergic to talk about common sense or scientific considerations, you can still appreciate how funny this is. While the Jacobs book presents itself as bringing fresh insights to the abduction phenomenon, there was one matter in which he was distinctly behind the curve and didn't realize it

It is in a section detailing his findings on "Basic Alien Biology." He repeats some observations from his prior book *Secret Life* (1992) about how aliens appear to never eat or excrete. They don't seem to have teeth, intestines, or an anus. (Nyah, nyan nyah -- Can't probe them!) One alien even directly tells one abductee, "We need no human consumption of the matter that you eat." Could they be robots? No, too easy.

Jacobs sets things up for his new discovery. He writes, "Until now, how aliens obtain fuel has been a mystery" (*The Threat*, 1998, p. 98) In a regression dated 6 July 1994, one of his abductees, Allison Reed, gave him "the key to the mystery." She sees a room full of tanks filled with liquid and she sees Greys bobbing around in them. One tells her that

the tanks are for eating and sleeping. Jacobs learnedly infers the aliens obtain their fuel "by absorption through the skin rather than ingestion." He observes this probably explains how alien foetuses survived in incubatoriums without umbilical cords. He adds a comment from southern Illinois abductee Diane Henderson that the liquid they float in was nutritious. This was revealed in a session dated 14 July 1994. Jacobs further reports Susan Steiner reported seeing nutrients brushed on the skin. He learns this in a session dated 9 October 1995.

Jacobs refers to this as "the absorption theory" and he clearly regards the insight as a personal triumph and a fresh advance. He writes, "Thus, whatever the specific and still unknown biological processes we **now know** that the aliens obtain fuel differently from humans, that their skin has a unique function, and that they convert 'food' to energy very differently." We'd know more, but aliens are a secretive lot. (*The Threat*, 1998, p. 101) Raise eyebrow, pause for it -- now?????

Ten years prior to Jacobs' book, January 1988, a document was circulating on the Internet that is infamous in UFO circles. It was called *The Krill Report* and it gathered together a lot of the rumours and paranoia that had been building up surrounding revelations first advanced by Paul Bennewitz concerning the Dulce base, an underground facility purportedly populated by alien Greys. From this digital file, we'll lift two relevant quotes:

We knew that the Greys were instrumental in performing the mutilations of animals (and some humans) and that they were using the glandular substances derived from these materials for food (absorbed through the skin) and to clone more Greys in their underground laboratories.

The apparent reasoning for the Grey preoccupation with this is due to their lack of a formal digestive tract and the fact that they absorb nutrients and excrete waste directly through the skin. The substances that they acquire are mixed with hydrogen peroxide and "painted" on their skin, allowing absorption of the required nutrients. It is construed from this that some weaponry against them might be geared in this direction.

These lines unambiguously demonstrate the existence of the absorption theory a full decade before Jacobs claims to unveil it. *The Krill Report* was widely read among UFO buffs - it was, I feel it is fair to say, virtually impossible to avoid it if you surfed the net for information about UFOs. This information about Grays absorbing nutrients through the skin quickly found its way into taxonomies of the period. Valerian (1988) reports of Grey Species 3 The Rigelians: "The nutrient glandulars extracted from terrestrial biological organisms is absorbed through their skin in a dual osmotic process. Nutrients are taken in and waste materials are excreted." George Andrews rephrases things for his "Tentative Taxonomy of Extraterrestrial Humanoids" Rigelians developed glandular problems due to nuclear war. "They derived nourishment - absorbed through their pores - from the glandular secretions and the enzymes extracted from the animals they mutilate. (Andrews 1993) Earlier versions of the Andrews taxonomy were available on the Web and Branton included a copy in his compilation/anthology *The Dulce Book* (1996).

Talk about the Greys and this information would eventually come up. Those who channeled Grays confirmed

the information from purportedly firsthand sources. Early in Lyssa Royals' *Visitors from Within* (1992), we learn the Zeta Reticulans genetically altered their bodies to absorb nutrients through the skin when nuclear war forced them underground. Plants died, oxygen decreased, and they turned to raising embryos in labs, cloning them, and altering their genes to alter the way their bodies functioned. (Royal & Priest, 1992, p. 4) In his 1996 article "Shades of Gray" Daryl Smith revises the Greys taxonomy of Andrews but keeps the information about nutrients being absorbed through the skin. (Smith 1996)

This absorption theory evolved out of Paul Bennewitz's work. Back in May 1980, Myrna Hansen purportedly was abducted and brought into the Dulce Base. Inside, she saw the "top of a bald head," apparently of a hairless alien in a tank full of cattle parts and human body parts. Bennewitz derives from this case the idea that aliens conduct mutilations to create a liquid "formula made from human or cattle material or both." In Project Beta he reports "If they do not get formula/food within a certain period they will weaken and die." They need water to create the "feeding formula," so he felt bombing the dams around the Dulce Base could be an effective way to attack them. In an April 1983 interview, he told a fellow colleague in cattle mutilation studies that the aliens use cattle DNA to create humanoids. If they do not get their food formula, they will turn green. They also eliminate through the skin. By March 1986 Bennewitz had reversed this. in a letter to a colleague Clifford Stone, he says the aliens are generally light green, but "when in need of formula or dead they turn GREY." They eliminate wastes via osmosis. (Branton 1996)

This information became high profile with the release of the John Lear statement [first version: 29 December 1987; revised: 25 March 1988]. Lear brings forward all sorts of paranoia such as the US being in business with little grey extraterrestrials for about 20 years. On the matter of the nature of Grays, Lear revealed they have a "genetic disorder in that their digestive system is atrophied and not functional." He indicates it's speculated that this came either from a nuclear war or they are "on the back side of an evolutionary genetic curve." They extract enzymes from human and animal

tissues. He specifically refers to the Dulce Base having vats of human body parts.

This information was further disseminated in newsstand UFO magazines in 1989. In their spring 1989 issue, *UFO Universe* gives a Clifford Stone interview that repeats Myrna Hansen's observation of vats of human parts in an underground base (Boyajian 1989). In their fall 1989 issue William Cooper relays his tale of seeing a briefing book in 1972 that discusses the four types of Greys and states they have atrophied, non-functioning digestive systems. They have chlorophyll and can get energy that way, but they also use blood and other animal fluids to survive on. They excrete their wastes through the skin. (Cooper 1989) In 1991, ufologist Forest Crawford reported that a crash-retrieval researcher he called Oscar had learned about a humanoid nicknamed Hank acquired in a disc-recovery research project called OSMA. Before Hank died Oscar was able to confirm Greys use human fluids for sustenance. "They feed by immersing their arms in vats and/or rubbing the fluids on their bodies." This was told in the spring 1991 issue of *UFO Journal of Facts* and repeated in Branton (1996).

"Revelations from the Leading Edge," [reprinted in Valdamar Valerian's *Matrix II* (1991)] elaborates the theory in these terms: "The Greys consume nourishment through a process of absorption through their skin. The process, according to abductees who have witnessed it, involved spreading a biological slurry mixture that has been mixed with hydrogen peroxide [which oxygenates the slurry and eliminates bacteria] onto their skin. Waste products are then excreted back through the skin." This source also tells the story of another abductee taken by entities from Bellatrix whose two children were killed when she would not co-operate:

She managed to run down a hallway and went into a room where she saw a vat full of red liquid and body parts of humans and animals. She saw another vat of the same type in which the liquid was being agitated, and as she looked into the vat she could see Greys bobbing up and down, almost swimming, absorbing the nutrients through their skin. There is also the use of H₂O₂ [water molecules with an extra oxygen atom added] in the vats in order to aid in preserving the fluid from rapid degeneration.

Not really surprisingly, this sensational tale is unreferenced. Further down in the document, it is added that alien digestive tracts are useless.

Nourishment is ingested by smearing a soupy mixture of biologicals on the epidermis. Food sources [include] Bovine cattle [and human] parts surgically removed by light technology [laser] and distilled into a high protein broth.

Branton (1996, chapter 30) also repeats these revelations.

Even if one whimsically decides to praise Jacobs for his good taste in not wading through the sewer of extremist paranoia beyond and beneath mainstream UFO culture, there are still a couple of problems. These claims were discussed in depth by higher browed ufologists who held these beliefs in contempt. Jacques Vallée, in *Revelations* (1991), described a meeting with William Cooper where he asserts of aliens, "Their biology is well-understood... Their digestive system is atrophied... They absorb nourishment through the skin, and they excrete through the skin, too" (Vallée, 1991, p. 74) Vallée is a long time veteran of the UFO controversy and his writings are obligatory reading for every ufologist. It would be unthinkable that Jacobs didn't own a copy. There is also Peter Brookesmith's *UFO: The Government Files* (1996). It was a major publication by Barnes & Noble that anyone considering himself an informed historian of ufology necessarily has in his library. The Myrna Hanson story is retold there in detail. In a section titled LEAR.TXT one also is exposed to the relevant details of aliens with atrophied digestive systems and formulas being applied to the skin by brush or by dipping. The absorption theory is unambiguously stated: "The body absorbs the solution, then excretes the waste back through the skin."(Brookesmith, 1996; pp. 108, 112)

So. Allison Reed clearly was not the first abductee to claim to see Greys bobbing around in vats and it would be a rare ufo buff who did not immediately think of Myrna Hansen's claims on hearing Reed's words. Susan Steiner's talk of seeing nutrients brushed on the skin should similarly remind even casually informed buffs of the passage in *The Krill Report* quoted above. When Jacobs suggests that hybrid babies lack umbilical cords because they absorb food

through the skin, I really had to smile. I had divined that interpretation myself in an article about incubatoriums back in 1995. (Kottmeyer 1995) The Greys' peculiar food habits were not exactly hidden. Type "Grays" into a search engine and information about the knowledge about their absorption biology would pop up on the first page of links. Magazines and books likewise circulated this stuff widely among the digitally disadvantaged.

Let me emphasize that the more mainstream ufologists ridiculed the idea that aliens populated the Dulce base. Vallée, in *Revelations* (1991, p. 54) was scathing, comparing them to Grimm's Fairy Tales, and provided reasons for his disbelief that were convincing to anybody not blinded by paranoia. It is unclear to me what ufologists who believe in abductions but disbelieve that Dulce Base was an alien lair do with Myrna Hanson's claims. Perhaps, like Jacobs, they forget them.

Given all of this, the thought that Dr Jacobs presents his absorption theory as new product is just hilarious. You don't have to be a sceptic to ask what cave he had been holed up in.

A few may now be wondering why I bring this up now. *The Threat* has been around seven years. Though I recognised how funny it was immediately, by itself it didn't seem worth bothering about. It didn't contribute to any larger point and buffs would just shrug it off as a personal attack over a very trifling matter.

Few Americans have ever seen Dan Dare comics. Its fame is such that its reputation as a must-see comic in British science fiction fandom is however known even here in the USA. Recently, a publisher here finally decided to collect together and reprint the Dan Dare series. I didn't need much convincing to decide to buy a couple of these new books of reprints. I liked it. Nice color palette and intricate art. In the process of reading it I discovered something I never suspected. In the 16th strip - it first appeared 28 July 1950 - a character named Digby is taken to a tank with liquid in it. His alien guide, a Venusian Treen - it is a reptoid by current alien taxonomy conventions - presents this vat as "The Food Bath - Thirty seconds immersion will give you all the nutrient you need." (Hampson, 2004)

While I am well used to UFO lore having precedents in science fiction, I was



Dan Dare's 1950 Venusian Food Bath

nonetheless happily amazed to see this. I mean this seemed pretty arcane stuff. My instinct was to discount the idea that this British strip could be a source of this absorption through the skin idea. There is nothing in Jungian psychology to suggest something like this would be archetypal. But could something like *this* be reinvented from scratch? Perhaps there is independent reasoning down from broader-shared pieces of knowledge.

The comic provides at least one clue. In Dan Dare #14, there was a seed planted in anticipation of discovering this vat. A Venusian Treen expresses feeling unfortunate to have landed among humans: "They have never, alas, outgrown their digestions, emotions, or fighting instincts." The Treens are implicitly a 'superior' race. In this they represent a parallel future evolution like that we see overtly underlying our ideas about the Greys. Maybe this is all a transitional strategy, an interim way to grow big brains without the messiness and inconvenience of animal bodies.

It should be remembered that H.G. Wells, no less, proposed as far back as 1893 that man in the far future might evolve an organic chemistry that made the distractions of eating and digestion a thing of the past.

Is there any absolute impossibility in supposing man to be destined for a similar change; to imagine him no longer dining, with unwieldy paraphernalia of servants and plates, upon food queerly dyed and distorted, but nourishing himself in elegant simplicity by immersion in a tub of nutritive fluid?

Though this particular piece is an

obscurity, the sentiment of wanting to be rid of our animal body is easy enough to come by. That sentiment pervades religion and in the present is easy enough to find in the writings cyber-philosophers who express hopes for downloading the mind into cyberspace and taking on virtual bodies. (Graham 2002)

Real-world knowledge of nutrient baths was common in the first half of the twentieth century. On 17 January 1912, Alexis Carrel, a Nobel laureate who revolutionised vascular surgery, extracted a chicken heart and kept it alive in a nutrient solution. He transferred the tissue every forty-eight hours, during which time it doubled in size and had to be trimmed before being moved to its new flask. According to legend it continued to live and grow for decades. This was immortalized in a *Lights Out* radio play first aired 10 March 1937 (reran 23 February 1938, 24 November 1942). In it the exponential growth of the chicken heart threatened the entire Earth. A couple of decades further on, this *Lights Out* episode formed the centre to Bill Cosby's famous chicken-heart comedy routine. It was preserved on his all-time best album *Wonderfulness*.

The motif about excreting through the skin is perhaps a twist on the fact that the skin is regarded as part of the excretory system in biology texts. Take away the intestines, add fluids, and perhaps the skin is the logical remaining organ to deal with impurities. Shirley Ann Varughese had proposed something of the sort in a 1976 anthology of space writings. Playing around with a fictional species called

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Xenophians, she set it up as a native in a nitrogen environment. "Liquid and other waste products from the cells are expelled through the pores of the skin, as he has no lungs and no waste-removal system." (Varughese 1975)

Of course, one can object that if these things are so logical why there is so little about food baths apart from Dan Dare's comics and the material subsequent to The Dulce Base. But, no, I would not say it was 'so' logical. One can reproduce the reasoning, but I don't feel it is an appealing notion. Swimming in broth is not my idea of a good meal. And if aliens excrete through the skin, how unpalatable might that bath be if you are swimming in leftovers? Is it plausible? Wells alludes to parasites that absorb their food from surrounding water, but can this work for full-grown humans? Humanoids? Reptoids? I tend to doubt it, since we did not evolve to work that way. Bipedal forms implicitly are evolved for walking on land. A creature getting its nutrients from fluids implicitly is most likely to have been evolved in an aquatic environment or other fluid medium. I will willingly defer to any organic chemists who can argue knowledgeably on whether it is absolutely possible or impossible to make non-aquatic skin absorb enough nutrients to survive on, but my gut rebels at the thought.

However you choose to account for the coincidence, presumably you understand why I started thinking of Jacobs again. He provides a happy little story by which to balance this notably more annoying mystery. It is one thing for a historian to be behind the curve; it is far more absorbing when the UFO phenomenon as a whole is yet again behind the curve. The fictional ones beat the 'real' ones even in this weirdness.

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EDITORIAL

Magonia has recently been criticised for being too much devoted to theory and speculation rather than the investigation of particular UFO reports. We do not have the resources to do any serious field work ourselves, but we are always pleased to consider detailed reports of such work for publication in *Magonia*, and in this newsletter. The article on the Carbondale UFO "crash" by Matt Graeber, which appeared in issue No. 55, was well received, and is an excellent example of the sort of material we would like to see more of.

NEW WEB SITE FOR MAGONIA SUPPLEMENT

<http://magsupp.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk>

This site contains html editions of all issues of this newsletter, plus index.

OUR OTHER WEB SITES

MAGONIA

<http://www.magonia.demon.co.uk>

This contains archives of articles and book reviews from *Magonia*, and other items including Kevin McClure's *Abduction Watch* and Andy Roberts's *Armchair Ufologist*. Unfortunately, technical problems prevent this site being updated at present.

MAGONIA Extra

<http://magonia.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk>

Archive of *MUFORG Bulletin*, the publication of the Merseyside UFO Research Group in the 1960s, which continued independently as *Merseyside UFO Bulletin* and eventually became *Magonia*. Photo Gallery. Notes and News. The Aldeburgh Platform - Carl Grove's investigation of a strange case from the early 20th century

MAGONIA READERS' MEETINGS

First Sunday of each month, 1915-2230, at the Railway, opposite Putney station.

Please note that the January 2006 meeting will be held on Sunday 8th.



LITERARY CRITICISM

Reviews by Peter Rogerson

Joaquim Fernandes and Fina D'Armada. *Heavenly Lights: the apparitions of Fatima and UFO phenomenon*. EcceNova, 2005. \$22.95.

I seem to have been hearing about Joaquim Fernandes's linking Fatima with UFOs for about 30 years now, and here at last is the English language edition of the full book. Of course this isn't new; Paul Misraki/Thomas did this in his attempt to shoehorn ufology into ultramontane Catholic dogma back in the 1960s.

What F and D'A do is take bits of what people say they experienced at Fatima and bits of UFO narratives and compare them. The authors claim to have gone back to the original sources, those created before the story was fully integrated into Catholic Marian tradition; this would have been a useful exercise if these sources had been quoted at length, unedited. As it is there is a whiff of convenient selection about the whole thing.

Though the authors claim that the original stories were of extraordinary experiences perceived and interpreted in terms of the culture of the period, they fail to see that their own reinterpretation does exactly the same thing, replacing traditional religious ideas with those of late 20th century belief in extraterrestrials. This is not helped by the fact that their ufology is of a fundamentalist kind of ETHism based on the pseudoscientific flying saucer propulsion theories of the likes of McCampbell and Petit. McCampbell, in turn, based some of his ideas on a literal reading of the books of George Adamski and other contactees.

A more sophisticated analysis would

be centred on the recognition that both Marian apparitions and UFO experiences are anomalous personal experiences perceived and interpreted in the terms and beliefs of the time and culture of the witnesses.

David Fontana. *Is there an Afterlife?* O Books, 2005. £14.99

In this study, Fontana analyses what he sees as the evidence for an afterlife from an examination of apparitions, hauntings, poltergeists, mental and physical mediumship, electronic voice phenomena, near death and out of the body experiences and reincarnation claims. This covers a wide field, and there is no doubt that much of the coverage is thorough. The exception is Ian Stevenson's studies of childhood memories of past lives. This might seem puzzling given that this is the evidence that many students of this field find most persuasive. It would appear however that reincarnation does not really fit in with Fontana's own spiritualist beliefs.

Despite the obvious effort put into this book, and the voluminous references, it is unlikely that it will impress those not already among the converted, indeed many parapsychologists are likely to groan inwardly and think that with friends like this, who needs CSICOP. The problem is the usual toxic mix of credulity and snobbery which undermines so much of the work of the SPR. Material of varying degrees of credibility is piled together, and Fontana never really comes to grips with the possibilities of fraud or artefacts of perception and memory.

Again and again his argument seems to boil down to the belief that nice middle class people don't lie, and that the right education and upbringing can make one proof against other people's fraud and your own malobservation. For a psychologist Fontana seems to have an incredibly naive and one-dimensional view of human nature and motivation. We are told for example that a woman diplomat engaged in EVP research couldn't possibly be engaged in fraud because she would have too much to lose if found out. Of course the rest us recognise that nice respectable people sometimes lead very strange double lives, and indulge in all sorts of inappropriate and risky behaviours, the catastrophic consequences of getting found out only adding to the thrill. (The truly cynical

would say that as diplomats lie for a living it should come easier to them than the rest of us).

Of course some of the cases reported here, if they occurred exactly as reported, would be very difficult to explain. It is also true that these cases tend to be the older ones, all dating to 70 or more years ago, and as such likely to impervious to reinvestigation.

Part of the problem is that like many in this field, Fontana is really only interesting in these odd experiences as a battering ram against modernity and 'materialism' both of which he disapproves. Indeed he writes like someone from the 1930s much of the time, and, yes, he does quote from Sir James Jeans.

Dick Taverne. *The March of Unreason: science, democracy and the new fundamentalism*. Oxford University Press, 2005.

Dick Taverne is perhaps best remembered as the maverick 'Democratic Labour' MP for Lincoln in the mid 1970s, and later as one of the founder members of the SDP. Here he resurfaces as a spokesperson for science.

The 'unreason' referred to in the title, relates less to the kinds of subject covered by *Magonia*, though Taverne is not impressed by 'alternative medicine', than to the environmental lobby and opposition to GM crops. I am afraid that your poor old reviewer is not equipped to evaluate the rival arguments here, but does have the feeling that while there may well be merits in Taverne's attacks on environmental fundamentalism, he himself trips at times into a kind of scientific fundamentalism which does not really take into account the complexities of the issues involved. I noted that he referred to Anna Bramwell's history of ecology, which notes its historical connections to the far right, without noting that her own husband was a member of a far right group. His account of the views of the Edinburgh historian of science David Bloor is pretty much a travesty.

It is interesting to note than when Taverne backs the dissident Bjorn Lomborg, who opposes the thesis of global warming, the lines between scepticism and Forteanism become peculiarly blurred. Is the difference solely on what you are sceptical about?

UFÓLOGOS BRASILEÑOS HUYEN DE DESAFÍO ESCÉPTICO

BRAZILIAN UFOLOGISTS FLEE SCEPTICAL CHALLENGE

La Nave de los Locos, No. 29, Noviembre de / November 2004

En septiembre de 2004 ocurrió un episodio histórico. Al menos para la ufología brasileña. Todo comenzó el día 10, cuando un miembro del consejo editorial de la revista *UFO* (www.ufo.com.br), publicación del Centro Brasileiro para Pesquisas de Discos Voadores (CBPDV), desafió a Kentaro Mori, editor del sitio web CeticismoAberto (ceticismoaberto.cjb.net), de la de la Sociedade da Terra Redonda (www.str.com.br/principal.php), el mayor grupo escéptico brasileño. Comenzaba el choque entre ufólogos y escépticos.

A esto lo siguió una serie de desafíos entre Mori y Ademar Gevaerd, presidente del CBPDV. Una semana después se acordó que la contienda debería ser mediada por una tercera parte. El grupo InterPsi, de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de São Paulo, fue invitado a cumplir esa tarea y el coordinador de ese grupo, el psicólogo Wellington Zangari, envió una propuesta de validación.

La comunidad ufológica, representada por Gevaerd, escogería "un caso que, a su criterio, ofreciera las mejores evidencias de la existencia de vida inteligente fuera de la Tierra", recogiendo la documentación relacionada. Ella sería analizada por la comunidad escéptica, representada por Mori, además de la comunidad científica, representada por cinco científicos independientes "de las principales universidades brasileñas (como la USP, la PUC-SP y la UNICAMP), de diferentes áreas del conocimiento, pero acostumbrados a evaluar objetivamente las evidencias". El día 21, la propuesta fue aceptada por ambas partes.

Pero la evaluación duró poco. Ocho días después de dar el sí, Gevaerd simplemente abandonó la contienda. En un mensaje enviado a todos los involucrados, mencionó tres motivos para desistir. "No me siento en la obligación de ofrecer pruebas de que los ovnis existen a quien quiera que sea", "no soy el exclusivo representante de la ufología brasileña" y "no tengo ningún ánimo para hacer una cosa como ésa. Y muchísimo menos tengo tiempo". Gevaerd fue incentivado a desistir por Carlos Reis, "mediador" de la revista *UFO*.

Increíblemente, Reis, después de afirmar que la cuestión sería una "pérdida de tiempo", escribe textualmente en un mensaje: "Yo sé, usted (Gevaerd) y mucha gente también sabe que la ufología es frágil, nosotros no trabajamos con pruebas, sino con indicios significativos de que estamos lidiando con un fenómeno de naturaleza desconocida. Sólo eso. No podemos afirmar que sea extraterrestre, tampoco podemos hablar de 'alienígenas', pues son apenas suposiciones, teorías, hipótesis, elucubraciones... Sabemos que la ufología es mucho más que la suma de sus partes, y no tenemos todas las partes, y las que tenemos no sabemos por dónde comenzar a estudiarlas... Entonces, ¿para qué entrar en esta estupidez del desafío?".

Zangari, de InterPsi, se declaró "absolutamente extrañado con el aviso de abandono... Asumir compromisos que involucran a personas nos obliga a tener actitudes menos impulsivas, sea para aceptar, sea para abandonar cualquier actividad. La comisión de mediación involucra a varias personas". Y continuó: "Considero la actitud del abandono, a esta altura, inmadura, irresponsable... De hecho, nadie debe sentirse obligado a nada, a no ser que tenga empeñada su por cerrado. "Entendemos no sólo que Gevaerd desistiera de la propuesta, sino que tambpalabra en algo".

Mori, representando a los escépticos, dio el episodio por cerrado. "Entendemos no sólo que Gevaerd desistiera de la propuesta, sino que también desistiera de reconocer su error", escribió.

www.lanavedeloslocos.cl

In September 2004 an historic event occurred. At least in Brazilian ufology. It all started on the 10th, when a member of the editorial board of the *UFO* magazine, publication of the Centro Brasileiro para Pesquisas de Discos Voadores (CBPDV) [Brazilian Centre for the Study of Flying Discs], challenged Kentaro Mori, editor of the web site CeticismoAberto, of the Sociedade da Terra Redonda [Round Earth Society], the major Brazilian sceptical group. Thus began the clash between ufologists and sceptics.

Then followed a series of challenges between Mori and Ademar Gevaerd, president of CBPDV. A week later it was agreed that the conflict should be mediated by a third party. The group InterPsi, of the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, was invited to carry out this task and the co-ordinator of this group, the psychologist Wellington Zangari, sent a proposal for validation.

The ufological community, represented by Gevaerd, chose "a case which, in their judgement, offered the best evidence for the existence of intelligent life outside the Earth", with a collection of the relevant documentation. This would be analysed by the sceptical community, represented by Mori, as well as the scientific community, represented by five independent scientists "from the principal Brazilian universities (such as USP, PUC-SP, and UNICAMP), from different areas of knowledge, but accustomed to the objective evaluation of evidence". On the 21st the proposal was accepted by all parties.

But the investigation didn't last long. Eight days after saying yes, Gevaerd simply abandoned the contest. In a message sent to all those involved, he mentioned three reasons for withdrawing. "I don't feel any obligation to offer proof that the UFOs exist to anyone who wants it," "I am not the only representative of Brazilian ufology" and "I'm not in the mood for doing this and it takes too much time." Gevaerd was encouraged to give up by Carlos Reis, "mediator" of the *UFO* magazine.

Incredibly, Reis, later affirming that pursuing the question would be a "waste of time" wrote this text in a message: "You (Gevaerd), I and many people also know that ufology is fragile, we don't work with proof but with significant indications that we are struggling to understand an unknown phenomenon. That's all. We can't affirm that it's extraterrestrial, neither can we talk of "aliens", just suspicions, theories, hypotheses, lucubrations ... We know that ufology is much more than the sum of its parts and from what we have we don't know where to start studying ... Anyway, why enter into the stupidity of this challenge?

Zangari, of InterPsi, declared himself "totally surprised by the notice of abandonment ... to assume commitments which involve people obliges us to have less impulsive attitudes when accepting or abandoning any activity. The mediation commission involves several people." He continued: "I consider the abandonment, in this manner, immature and irresponsible ... In fact, nobody need feel any obligation unless he has given his word on something."

Mori, representing the sceptics, closed the episode with "We understand that Gevaerd not only rejected the proposal, but he also failed to acknowledge his mistake", he wrote.

Translation: John Harney